

amounts of rain from the typhoon triggered enormous mudslides and severe flooding throughout southern Taiwan. In perhaps the worst single tragedy, one of those mudslides buried the entire town of Xiaolin, killing more than 500 people.

Fortunately, during our brief visit to Taipei, all of us in the congressional delegation had a chance to express our personal condolences to the people of Taiwan while in meetings with President Ma Ying-jeou, Foreign Minister Francisco H.L. Ou, and Legislative Yuan President Wang Jin-pyng. With this resolution, now all Members of the House—on behalf of the people and government of the United States—will have a chance to extend their sincerest condolences as well.

As the resolution notes, and as we were told while in Taiwan, the United States was able to provide aircraft, helicopters, and other forms of assistance to speed the recovery efforts. And as we found out, one of the important factors enabling our swift and robust response was President Ma's success in working to reduce tensions across the Taiwan Straits.

Taiwan expects the hard work of repair and reconstruction will continue for the next 3 years. But our friends in Taiwan should know that the United States and the American people understand their suffering and stand ready to continue assisting them as they repair the devastation wrought by the typhoon. For this reason, I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 733.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 733, which expresses condolences to the people and government of the Republic of China, Taiwan, in the aftermath of the devastating typhoon that struck the central and southern regions of the island on August 8, 2009. I support this resolution because natural disasters know no boundaries and the tragedy that befell Taiwan appeals to our common humanity.

After Typhoon Morakot landed on Taiwan at midnight on August 8 of this year, it dropped over 100 inches of rain on the island. To put that number in perspective, 100 inches is more than half the average annual rainfall of many places on the island. The torrential rain caused massive mudslides and floods, destroying roads, farms, businesses, and homes. This typhoon was the wettest in the history of Taiwan.

Typhoon Morakot was particularly devastating in central and southern Taiwan. The world watched in horror as the reports came in. In the southern village of Hsiaolin, mudslides had destroyed almost all of the roughly 250 homes in the village, stranded thousands, and buried almost 400 people alive. A rescue helicopter trying to reach villagers stranded in the mountains crashed, killing all three crew members. In all, estimates have put the devastation to infrastructure and farms totaling more than \$46 billion and the national death toll over 600. A tragedy of that magnitude traumatized Taiwan and required an official period of 3 days to mourn the lost. This typhoon was the deadliest in Taiwan's history.

I applaud the effort of the United States to help with the relief effort. The U.S. gave humanitarian assistance by providing military aircraft, planes and helicopters, to deliver relief supplies on the island. Our service men and women performed their job admirably and I am thankful for their solid performance.

I would like for the people of Taiwan to know how very sorry we are that they have experienced this tragedy. Having witnessed first-hand the devastation brought by Hurricane Ike on my own district in Houston, Texas, and the surrounding areas, I know how a terrible natural disaster such as a typhoon can cause deep anguish. Moreover, from our experience witnessing Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, we know how the horror of weather-related devastation can scar a nation. My heart goes out to the families and the people of Taiwan.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for House Resolution 733 and to convey my deepest sympathies and sincerest wishes to the people of Taiwan who have been affected by Typhoon Morakot. I especially want to give my condolences to the families of the more than 600 people who died in this devastating storm, particularly those who perished in the mudslide in Hsiaolin village.

I wish the people of Taiwan well as they work to rebuild and recover from the worst typhoon to hit the island in 50 years. I am confident that the Taiwanese people will continue to come together to help those in need.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 733, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title was amended so as to read: "A resolution expressing condolences to the people and Government of Taiwan in the aftermath of the devastating typhoon that struck the central and southern regions of the island on August 8, 2009."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### REAUTHORIZING RADIO FREE ASIA

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3593) to amend the United States International Broadcasting Act of 1994 to extend by one year the operation of Radio Free Asia, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3593

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. ONE YEAR EXTENSION OF OPERATION OF RADIO FREE ASIA.

Section 309(f) of the United States International Broadcasting Act of 1994 (22 U.S.C. 6208(f)) is amended by striking "2009" and inserting "2010".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gen-

tlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

□ 1115

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, Radio Free Asia provides timely, accurate and useful news and information to countries whose leadership prohibits access to truly free media. Listeners in China, Tibet, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea and Burma can learn about what is happening in their own countries and in their own languages and dialects through professional and objective reporting and discussion programs on RFA.

RFA's performance is impressive in parts of the world where governments make independent broadcasting difficult or even impossible. It is one of our most dynamic surrogate broadcasters.

RFA uses well-established means of information dissemination, such as shortwave transmissions and hand-cranked radios, that are spirited to listeners who are otherwise entirely cut off from the world. It also makes use of modern media technologies such as live streaming over the Internet in regions where access to computers is relatively common but where governments place controls on news reporting. The listener feedback to these programs by e-mail and during call-in talk shows is very impressive. It provides a credible window on the pervasiveness of corruption and autocracy.

I think most of us agree that it is useful to continue operating RFA, as it serves to help maintain freedom of information overseas as well as promoting better understanding of United States values such as democracy.

The legislation before us, offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) would reauthorize RFA to continue its operations for the next fiscal year. I strongly urge all of our colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of H.R. 3593. I want to thank my good friend from California (Mr. ROYCE), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, for introducing this measure.

Thirteen years ago next week, on September 29, 1996, Radio Free Asia first went on the air with a Mandarin language broadcast into China. Today,

RFA broadcasts into China, Tibet, North Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Burma in nine local languages and dialects. It provides timely, objective news to people who are denied the benefit of a free press in their own homeland.

Not only did Congress create and fund that surrogate broadcasting service, we also urged RFA to increase its transmissions to particularly vulnerable populations, such as the people of North Korea, as we did in the North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004 and last year's reauthorization of that law. We are proud and supportive of the good work that Radio Free Asia continues to do.

While the authorization of appropriations for RFA was previously extended, it appears that the statutory section detailing RFA's grant-making authority was inadvertently omitted from that reauthorization, leaving it to expire at the end of this month. Therefore, we have this one-sentence bill before us today to correct that oversight. In the time when we see bills of over 1,000 pages in length which many have not read, it is wonderful to see a very simple bill, a brief bill, but a very important bill.

Both Republican and Democrat versions of The Foreign Relations Authorization Act introduced in this Congress include a provision that would remove the sunset of RFA authority, making it permanent. I look forward to working toward a long-term reauthorization of the RFA on a bipartisan basis during the year ahead. I urge support for this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the author of this legislation and the individual behind the United States' international broadcasting of Radio Free Asia, Mr. ROYCE of California.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. I rise in support of this bill. I just want to take a moment here to thank Chairman BERMAN and also Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their assistance in moving this bill so expeditiously to the floor. There is a timing issue here. We need to pass this out soon, and this, of course, will allow us to broadcast for an additional year. September 30 is the day on which this authority will expire. I wish we could do more. I do.

Earlier this year, as you know, Chairman BERMAN passed a State Department authorization bill out of this House that would have established permanent authority for RFA. The other body, the Senate, has yet to take up this legislation. We wish they would.

We can debate the merits of a long-term extension versus sunset repeal, but there is one thing certain in all of this, and that is that the target countries that we broadcast into, countries like North Korea and China, like Burma and Vietnam, they give no indication of allowing a free local press any time soon.

At a practical level, I understand that RFA's sunset restriction has ham-

pered RFA's operations. It hampers the ability to go out and hire, obviously, on a permanent basis. You can't negotiate a lease or capital improvements and so forth. So it is important that we address this issue.

I think it is important that we focus on the success of Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty and Radio Free Asia. Radio Free Asia was founded in 1996, and it attempts to replicate what RFERL did in Eastern Europe. Its mission is to act as a surrogate news service, performing as a free press would if it was allowed to operate in any of these countries. Quite simply, its broadcasts are devoted to the enlightenment of people, to letting people know what is actually happening in their country and around the world.

My interest in these broadcasts stems from a trip I took to Dresden, East Germany, years ago, where a man told me about the damage that these broadcasts were inflicting on Soviet tyranny and shared with me the effect that they seemed to be having, an effect without firing a shot, an effect in which the world was changed without the loss of a human life.

Surrogate broadcasts, mainly radio but increasingly these new media, provide people with the news and information about their countries that otherwise they couldn't possibly obtain. As one observer has noted, this type of broadcasting irritates authoritarian regimes. It inspires democracies. It creates greater space for civil society. Yes, it does. It does change societies.

Irritate totalitarian regimes? Yes, that has happened. China has attempted to erect a "great wall of sound" to block RFA transmissions. They are not successful, but they block some of them. Vietnam has heavily jammed RFA since the first days of the broadcast. You may not be able to get it inside the capital, but you can get it in the countryside.

We know what news these Communist regimes are afraid of. In North Korea, broadcasting such as this is one of the only sources chipping away at Pyongyang's propaganda machine. When I talk to defectors out of North Korea, as often as not they have listened to these broadcasts, especially the senior civil servicemembers. And military members who defect tell about how it changed their view of the world.

All around the globe, an information war is at play. Iran is spending heavily to block our broadcasting, while beaming its own message into Afghanistan and even the Balkans to sow division. Russia is broadcasting into southeastern Europe as well. Hugo Chavez is crippling local media while bolstering Venezuela's state broadcasts around Latin America, and he is preaching anti-Americanism with those broadcasts. Then there are the 150 sharia-friendly radio broadcasts in Pakistan's Swat Valley. Those are the broadcasts that the Taliban are making in Afghanistan and in northwest Pakistan.

So, from Caracas to Tehran to Pyongyang, these totalitarian regimes understand that controlling information is central to their being. Radio Free Asia is one of our pieces on this chess board.

I look forward to the passage of this legislation and to working with the chairman and ranking member to seek a more important standing for this critical organization.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3593, which amends the United States International Broadcasting Act of 1994 to extend for an additional year the grant-making authority of the Broadcasting Board of Governors regarding Radio Free Asia (RFA). Without this legislation, that grant-making authority will expire this week, putting the important services of RFA at risk.

The U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994 called for RFA to engage in "the continuation of existing U.S. international broadcasting, and the creation of a new broadcasting service to people of the . . . countries of Asia, which lack adequate sources of free information and ideas [to] enhance the promotion of information and ideas." Reflecting its mandate, Radio Free Asia describes its mission as providing "accurate and timely news and information to Asian countries whose governments prohibit access to a free press." One of RFA's ultimate aims is "to serve as a model on which others may shape their own emerging journalistic traditions."

Guided by its core principles of freedom of expression and opinion, RFA has provided domestic news and information to its listeners since 1996. Each RFA broadcast—in nine different languages—is distinctive as each reflects the unique culture and preferences of its listeners.

As a result of its rigorous journalistic standards and hard work, RFA has won numerous honors. This year, for example, Radio Free Asia was named Broadcaster of the Year by the prestigious New York Festivals Radio Programming and Promotions Awards.

That recognition is well deserved as Radio Free Asia is an important voice for millions of listeners, and this legislation will ensure that RFA's voice will be heard for another 12 months. For this reason, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3593.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3593.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### REAFFIRMING THE HISTORIC TIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE NETHERLANDS

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 178) expressing the sense of the Congress that